

SPECIAL ISSUE: NEW DEMANDS FOR A NEW TERM

# THE INDYPENDENT

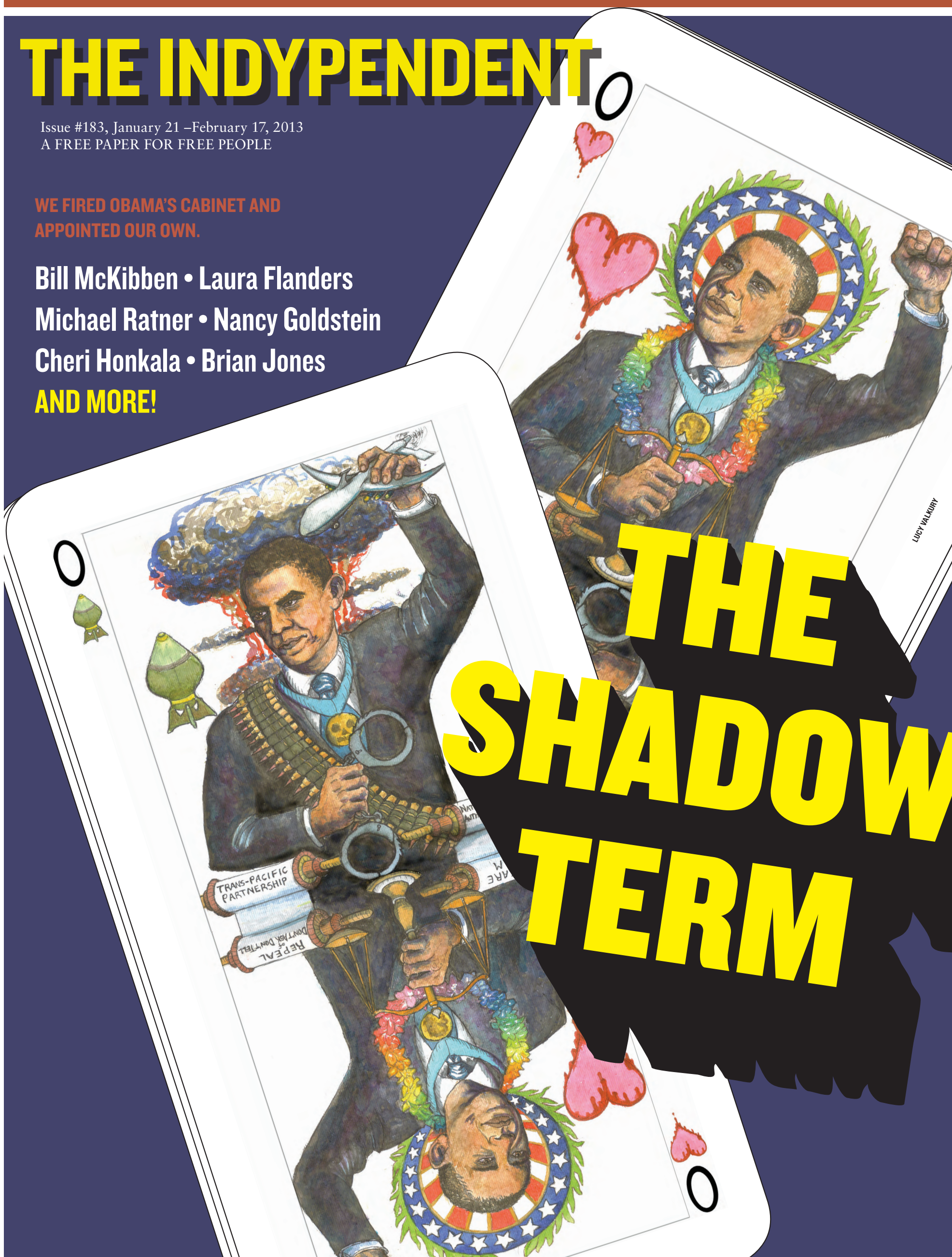
Issue #183, January 21 –February 17, 2013  
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

WE FIRED OBAMA'S CABINET AND  
APPOINTED OUR OWN.

Bill McKibben • Laura Flanders  
Michael Ratner • Nancy Goldstein  
Cheri Honkala • Brian Jones  
**AND MORE!**

# THE SHADOW TERM

LUCY WALKURY





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*The Indypendent* is a New York-based free newspaper published 13 times a year on Mondays for our print and online readership of more than 100,000. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 700 journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Indypendent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. *The Indypendent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

*The Indypendent* is affiliated with the New York City Independent Media Center, which is part of the global Indymedia movement, an international network dedicated to fostering grassroots media production, and with *IndyKids*, a children's newspaper. NYC IMC is an open publishing website (nyc.indymedia.org).

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# RE-IGNITE THE RADICAL IMAGINATION

(A brief note from the guest editors)

DEAR READER:

*This is what you can ask for, this is what you can expect.* We get told this all the time by our liberal friends, pundits on Sunday morning talk shows, lobbyists, politicians: the entire political establishment.

*These are the rules. This is how we get things done.* They drum a litany of limits, barriers, and lowered expectations. We are told, in so many other words, to settle. To buckle down and accept. In the words of Nina Simone, "They keep on saying 'Go slow!'"

Unless it's time to go to war for plunder or bail out the biggest banks from their most recent blunder, slow is the speed and meek are the designs. Our politics are marinated in quiet submission to the dominant order. We are told to project our hopes for change onto Obama, but when it's time to get the work done, we are instructed to fold our trust into the bureaucrats and old Washington hands who know best. And if they bring back bank bailouts and war, but fail to stop foreclosures or address global climate change, well, they did the best they could.

This issue you are holding in your hands is one screaming rejection of all of that. As one presidential term ends and another begins, we want to take this opportunity to reject the pomp of inauguration and reignite the radical imagination. Instead of settling for empty suits and ugly compromises, we've tossed Obama's cabinet out of White House and reached out to thinkers and doers, those least likely to be nominated but most deserving of being heard and best qualified to make change, and nominated them to our own Shadow Cabinet.

What would happen if the country's fiercest advocate for the homeless could remake the Department of Housing and Urban Development? Turn to page 14 to see what Cheri Honkala, national coordinator for the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, suggests. What would happen if Homeland Security was recreated by someone who has been through some of the country's harshest prisons, as a prisoner himself? See page 3 for how Andy Stepanian would remake the department. Bill McKibben, on the frontlines fighting global climate change, doesn't think he'd last that long as the secretary of energy, but turn to page 10 to see what he'd push before he was fired. And that's just a few of the voices herein.

We can demand more, more than what is asked for in this issue. We need to conjure up new expectations, create better politics, to think and act on all of this. Here are some ideas for you to read, whether on the subway home after a long day of work or on the bus to a protest. The time is now. There's a lot to get done.

With love,

Your guest editors,

ANNA GOLD AND SAM ALCOFF

*We would like to thank the contributors and illustrators, as well as the regular Indypendent production staff who patiently let us take the helm for an issue.*

## community calendar

### SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS AT INDY-EVENTS@GMAIL.COM

#### SATURDAYS

9:30pm • Free

MUSIC: SEANCHAI AND THE UNITY

SQUAD. Celtic music, reggae, hip hop and socialism magically become one of the best live acts in Brooklyn. In the aftermath of Sandy, which destroyed the sound system in the Red Hook bar where they play weekly, the band is doing all-acoustic sets until repairs are finished. **(EDITORS' CHOICE)**

Rocky Sullivan's

34 Van Dyke St, Bklyn

718-246-8050 • rockysullivansredhook.com

#### WED JAN 23

8pm • Free

READING: THE TROUBLE IS THE BANKS:

LETTERS TO WALL STREET. In the fall of

2011, the website occupytheboardroom.

org invited visitors to write down their

beliefs about the financial system and their

experiences with loans and banking. Polite,

funny, outraged, moving, instructive, and

inspiring. They are one of the most immediate

and unfiltered records ever assembled of

what went on in the housing bubble and the

financial crisis.

St. Marks Bookshop

31 Third Avenue

212-260-7853 • stmarksbookshop.com

#### SAT JAN 26

12-3pm • Sliding scale

CLASS: KID REPORTERS WRITING AND

REPORTING WORKSHOP. *IndyKids* newspa-

per is offering a workshop to kids ages 9-13.

Kids work alongside professional journalists

to research, write and edit articles about

current events and social justice. Two ad-

ditional workshops will be held at the same

time on Feb. 2, Feb. 9 and Feb. 16. For location

information and to RSVP, contact info@

indykids.org.

212-592-0116 • indykids.org

#### WED JAN 30

6:30-8:30pm • Free

A LEGAL WORKSHOP FOR LESBIAN, GAY,

BISEXUAL, TWO-SPIRIT, TRANS, INTER-

SEX & GENDER NON-CONFORMING IM-

MIGRANTS. Food, Metrocards and Spanish

interpretation available. RSVP by Jan 28.

Audre Lorde Project

147 W. 24th St., 3rd Fl

212-463-0342 ext. 16 • alp.org

#### FRI FEB 1

8pm • Free

PERFORMANCE/EXHIBITION: LANGSTON

HUGHES: THE BLACK CLOWN EXHIBITION.

Artwork in his exhibition is a multimedia pre-

sentation full of vibrant oil pastels that give

life to Adeagbo Mwai Mudo and Renaldo

Davidson's shared interpretations of iconic

works.

Brecht Forum

451 West Street (btw Bank & Bethune)

212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

#### SAT FEB 9

4pm-6pm • RSVP

LAUNCH: 101 CHANGEMAKERS. *101*

*Changemakers* offers a "people's history"

version of the individuals who have shaped

our country, for middle school students and

up. Speakers include Bhairavi Desai, Barbara

Young, Michele Bollinger, Dao X. Tran and

Brian Jones. Cosponsored by IndyKids,

CUNY PhD Program in Urban Education,

New York Coalition of Radical Educators

(NYCoRE), Teaching for Change, and Voices

of a People's History, and Ya-Ya Network.

224 W 29th St. 14th Fl.

jason@haymarketbooks.com

#### SUN FEB 10

6:30pm • \$10

SCREENING: LEFT AND REVOLUTIONARY

CINEMA: THE WEST. Four films, includ-

ing Newsreel's *Yippie!* and Machover and

Fruchter's *Troublemakers*, an exploration

of the problems encountered by young SDS

activists organizing the ghetto in Newark.

Anthology Film Archives

32 Second Ave

(212) 505-5181 • anthologyfilmarchives.org

#### SAT FEB 16

8pm • \$17

PERFORMANCE: PEARLS OF WISDOM;

HARMONIC INSURGENCE. The People's

Voice Cafe celebrates 32 years of peace and

resistance.

Community Church of New York Unitarian-

Universalist

40 E. 35th St. (Madison/Park)

212-787-3903 • peoplesvoicecafe.org

#### SAT FEB 21

3-6pm • Free (RSVP required)

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION OF THE

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION

OF MALCOLM X. A day of talks, films and

discussions about the legacy of Malcolm X.

Schomburg Center

515 Malcolm X Blvd

212-491-2252 • nypl.org

#### FRI FEB 22

7:30pm • \$10

SCREENING: THE THROWAWAYS. This

documentary follows homeless activist Ira

McKinley, weaving his personal narrative

of survival with stories of movements rising

up to speak truth to power. A personal look

at the complex challenges facing urban

America.

Maysles Institute

343 Lenox Avenue

212-582-6050 • Mayslesinstitute.org

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CALENDAR VIA EMAIL AT INDY-  
PENDENT.ORG.**

# AN AMERICAN STORY OF EMPATHY AND HEALING

**ANDY STEPANIAN**

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

In the weeks between my appointment and when I entered this office I had the privilege of spending several days alongside former Secretary Janet Napolitano. I found Secretary Napolitano's leadership to be exemplary as applied to the terms defining her position as DHS secretary. These terms, framed 11 days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, provide a foundation for what it means to direct our Department of Homeland Security. However, I regretfully, and respectfully, submit to you today, that these terms upon which we apply the responsibility of securing of our homeland are flawed. I intend to spend my term as secretary redefining these terms, and eventually redefining the position of secretary to the Department of Homeland Security.

With no disrespect intended to Secretary Napolitano, I will share with you a conversation she and I had regarding these aforementioned terms.

When I asked Secretary Napolitano to recall her first days in office, she waxed nostalgic about a conversation she had in 2009 with her predecessor, Secretary Michael Chertoff, about "the cornerstone of our security apparatus." This "cornerstone" was handed down from Tom Ridge to Chertoff to Napolitano. When I asked her what this "cornerstone" was she simply replied, "the enemization of everything."

Over the past nine-and-a-half years, this department has grown exponentially to employ more than 240,000 Americans around a principle that in order to inoculate our population against an attack by an invisible enemy we must first "enemize" everything, treating each and every living thing (and at times even non-living electronic entities) as if she, he, they or it were plotting the next attack on our homeland. The private sector has also seen unfettered growth around its ability to monetize "the enemization of everything," from developing security technologies in response to unforeseen "enemies" to using the specter of terrorism to draft and fast-

track model legislation that serves business interests.

While taking a position that everything is an "enemy" can make it harder for an "enemy" to execute his or her plans, it also creates an ugly, fear-driven environment that sows seeds of distrust, from misplaced suspicions about your neighbor's religious or political affiliations to fears of crowds or airplanes. Moreover, this "enemization of everything" has been observed to have a profound psychological impact on some individuals. For some, being told over and over by peers or media that they are "an enemy" makes them want to react by becoming that enemy. After surviving a decade rife with violent outbursts and mass shootings, we as a nation cannot afford to ignore the psychological impacts of our post-9/11 terror culture and security-industrial complex on the moral fabric of our communities.

I intend to use my directorship here at the Department of Homeland Security to transform this agency into a restorative agency. To do so we must first undo this prerequisite "enemization" model. We then need to reach an understanding that terrorism, whether political or apolitical like a shooting in a movie theater, almost always has an origin. These origins should be treated as wounds that we as an agency have a responsibility to heal. If we as an agency can isolate these origins on various cultural, systematic or personal levels, we can begin to heal the wounds that jeopardize our security.

From deeply personal individual battles with cancer to the global war on terror, human responses to these acute onslaughts are almost always reactionary and seldom preventative.

Amid the immediacy of our tragedies we rarely question what brought us to those malignant moments; instead we desperately reach for quick fixes — surgery, chemotherapy, torture, drones, carpet-bombing. In the global war on terror, preventative medicine is often practiced as pre-emptive military action, rendition, entrapment, torture and sanctions. These means never challenge the cultural roots of the problem and often serve

as a tool for terrorist recruitment.

Like flourishing bacterial cultures in a petri dish, terrorism is a symptomatic cultural reflex that can be easily seen growing out of its own hospitable environments. Oppression, poverty, inadequate education, constant subjugation to the accepted institutionalized abuse of animals and a lack of individual autonomy are the stagnant waters in which this global disease of terrorism takes root and grows. As secretary, I intend to use this agency to analyze, isolate and ultimately treat the prerequisite events that give way to future acts of violence.

To make this agency a restorative agency, not only must we speak in a restorative man-

ner, but our actions and our policies must also promote restoration.

Many of my detractors have speculated about my proposed policy changes, some have gone as far as to call them "treasonous." I will reserve any comments regarding my policy plans for a later date, but can assure those detractors that I fully intend to re-write their script of "enemization" to an American story of empathy and healing.

Sincerely,

Andy Stepanian

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY



DAVID HOLLENBACH.COM



Andy Stepanian is the co-founder of SparrowMedia.net and a SHAC 7 defendant who served three years in federal prison on terrorism-related charges.



**MICHAEL RATNER**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

1. **Handcuff the FBI not activists.** Protect our right to dissent and protest by ending FBI surveillance, spying, wiretapping, racial and ethnic profiling, use of informants and entrapment of activists and others not engaging in criminal activity.
  2. **No criminal prosecutions of those involved in the sale or personal use of all drugs.** Recommend the immediate parole of all persons jailed for crimes relating to drugs.
  3. **Recommend parole for tens of thousands in federal prisons including those convicted as juveniles, political prisoners such as Native American activist Leonard Peltier and those serving more than 20 years.** Those remaining should be treated humanely (no solitary), and given educational programs. Ultimately, prisons must be abolished. *"When the prison doors are opened, the real dragon will fly out."* — Ho Chi Minh
  4. **No prosecution of the undocumented.** No more criminal enforcement of immigration laws including Operation Streamline, which has resulted in criminal prosecution and jail sentences for scores of thousands of immigrants
  5. **End the prosecution of truth tellers and internet activists.** Bradley Manning, Jeremy Hammond, Julian Assange, Barrett Brown, the late Aaron Swartz and untold others who seek to expose criminality and challenge corporate control of information which should be free to all.
  6. **Don't enforce the tax laws against those forced to carry the burden for the rich.** The attorney general cannot change the tax code, but can refuse enforcement of its
- John Yoo, who tried to justify the practice.
9. **Too big to fail; too big not to be in jail.** Bank and financial institutional fraud was one of the main causes of the 2008 continuing crash. Yet, 2011 saw prosecutions of financial institutions fall by half from the decade before. Prosecuting bank and financial fraud is a necessity. Another crash is inevitable under our current capitalist system, but its severity can perhaps be limited by going after the big, bad banks.
  10. **Propose a law similar to that in Bolivia, Law of the Rights of Mother Earth (Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra).** The law gives a legal personality to the human community and life/ecosystems. Even prior to trying to pass such a law I would ensure that all of the federal agencies under the Department of Justice protect Mother Earth and her life systems. I would attempt to enforce those rights in court by seeking to protect indigenous communities and their culture and the right to clean water and air and to live free from contamination.

While the above actions are possible under our current capitalist system, as I said, they are unlikely without a mass movement making militant demands.

I want to conclude with a paragraph by my friend Michael Smith, who is co-editing a forthcoming book entitled *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA*:

"Law in America is sold as an impartial force for justice and equality. The frauds of formal equality of rights and the apparent neutrality of judges was brilliantly pierced

## TOWARD A REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

It will be a cold day in hell when a person with my politics is appointed attorney general of the United States. The attorney general is the head of the misnamed Department of Justice, better named the Department of Injustice. She (one woman has held the job since 1789) is the chief law enforcement officer of the United States and enforces or does not enforce federal criminal and civil laws including civil rights laws. Agencies such as the FBI (U.S. political police) and the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) come under its umbrella. Even within the context of a capitalist structure and a legal system that currently oppresses the majority of the population, the attorney general could turn this society on its head and take important steps toward a more equal, less oppressive and freer society.

What I have suggested below are arguably transitional steps that contain within them the potential for aiding a revolutionary transformation of society. I want to stress that none of these can be achieved without a massive mobilization of people in the streets. Ultimately, only with socialism will we live in a society where law will work for people and not be employed as a means to protect the ruling class.

Let's assume I take office on January 20, 2013, the same day Obama takes the oath of office for his second term.

What do I do on the first day? I could number a sheet of paper from one to 100 that would reflect many of the actions I would take. However, for today, let's start with the top 10. I would begin by not enforcing certain laws, which I have the right to do; then I would investigate and prosecute the real bad guys.

unequal burden. No criminal prosecution or civil enforcement actions against people or families who earn under \$40,000 and who refuse to pay taxes. Tax the rich, not those with lower incomes.

7. **Indict and prosecute Obama and administration officials for murder by targeted assassination.** A federal judge recently said, in the context of the drone killing of Anwar Al-Awlaki, that the President could be subject to prosecution under a U.S. statute prohibiting "foreign murder of United States nationals."
8. **Indict and prosecute the George W. Bush torture team.** Bush, Dick Cheney, former CIA head George Tenet, scores of others and the lawyers such as Alberto Gonzales and

by Anatole France's oft-quoted remark that the law in all its majesty forbids all persons, whether rich or poor, from sleeping under bridges. With socialism in America, the people will own the bridges, and they'll sleep peacefully and contentedly with a roof over their heads knowing full well that they have created a society where the law won't work against them and in the words of that great manifesto 'where the full development of each is the condition of the full development of all.'



Michael Ratner is an attorney, president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), and co-author of *Hell No: Your Right to Dissent in 21st-Century America*.

## UPROOTING THE WARPATH

**NATHAN SCHNEIDER**  
SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE



Nathan Schneider is an editor of *wagingnonviolence.org*. He is also an editor at *Killing the Buddha*. Visit his website at *TheRowBoat.com*.

Let me start by making my office better resemble its title: Secretary of Defense — not Secretary of Discretionary Drone Strikes, or Secretary of Maintaining a Massive Military Presence in Every Corner of the World, or Secretary of Useless Weapons Systems Made in Key Congressional Districts, or Secretary of Support for the Israeli Occupation. I will calibrate my office to the defense of a country that has not faced the threat of military incursion for more than half a century and whose primary threats today appear to be small bands of fighters whose cause is only strengthened by a large-scale military response. The money saved from doing so will bring a truer kind of security by paying off the national debt, ensuring basic necessities for all people and forestalling what the Pentagon has already identified as a dire threat to global security: climate change.

I will cut spending. I will do more by doing less. Bring it on, confirmation hearings.

# A STATE OF CONTRADICTION

**LAURA FLANDERS**

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Respected colleagues, I am flattered by your offer but in good conscience I cannot accept your invitation to serve as secretary of state. To be honest, some of the duties involved I consider impossible, others undesirable, and what remain are years out of date. The best advice I can offer is that you save on concussions and emissions and do the planet and public spending a favor by scrapping the post.

To elaborate: prominent among the duties assigned the secretary of state (henceforth SOS) is representing the United States in high-level negotiations with other states. Imagining that such negotiations turn at least occasionally to matters of international law and human rights, consider the quandary: Is the SOS to argue for those principles so often vaunted in public declarations, or, in light of actual U.S. practices, to adopt a defiant position against? First-strike war, targeted assassination, torture and occupation are hard to gloss.

There are other problems. The SOS is

charged with protecting U.S. citizens abroad, and yet the President asserts the right to attack and kill anyone on suspicion (including U.S. citizens) anywhere at any time. You see the challenge.

It is not easy to win respect and influence people in countries whose first association with the United States is with a thousand sprawling military bases, proliferating intelligence agencies, wiretaps, extraordinary renditions, the dungeon of Guantánamo and a shadowy cast of “advisors” and “trainers.” The calm tones of diplomacy are drowned out by the din of drone attacks.

Don’t worry too much about international law, I hear you say. The United States hasn’t signed very much of the stuff. Of course, you’re right. (Not that signing matters. We are a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights yet we violate it daily as matter of principle and as a matter of course. We tolerate mass hunger, unemployment and the death penalty in promotion of “individual responsibility” and steadily suppress wages and workers’ rights in the United States and around the world to boost private profits.)

Still, it’s embarrassing how many worthy treaties on the rights of the child, land mines, cluster bombs, small arms, even discrimination against women, lie about unratified, even unsigned. The doctrine of American exceptionalism and “Do As We Say, Not as We Do” is a hard sell for our diplomatic corps.

Aside from the United States’ own wars and occupations, the prime causes of insecurity in the past few years have been global financial institutions, some based in the United States. By its own definition, U.S. foreign policy is intended “to create a more secure democratic and prosperous world for the benefit of American people and the international community.” Yet the pursuit of prosperity for some has made much of the world more insecure and less democratic. For all the talk of non-state actors, terrorists and armed insurgents, it was Goldman Sachs not Al Qaeda that brought the Greek economy to the brink by increasing and covering up that state’s debts while making a massive private profit. Financial speculation by (among others) U.S.-based Wells Fargo fueled price fluctuations and food shortages that sparked riots in more than 30 countries in 2007-08, and the overthrow of Haiti’s government, before prices peaked again in February 2011, during the Arab Spring.

Is diplomats’ power any match for Wall Street? Global financial institutions



are famously “too big to jail.” There was no time served by the mortgage mobsters who tricked a generation out of its wealth. There will be no life sentence without parole for the executives of HSBC, even when they have been found laundering cash for narco-terrorists. Those global players don’t attend diplomatic conferences. Likewise, there’s no bite (and barely any bark) in the office of secretary of state when it comes to the destabilizing effect of global trade, even when unscrupulous financial trading practices are prime threats to peace and human rights.

Give us back the wars of yore. The rogue state that invaded its neighbor was a whole lot easier to rein in than Coca Cola or Shell or Motorola. Impoverished nations will sell water, fuel and minerals to the highest bidder, and why shouldn’t they? Beholden to the same breed of corporations, the United States opposes climate regulations. If global warming is not seen as a threat to national security, why should smaller states worry about resource wars?

Besides, why would anyone worry about peace? The United States talks peace but triples weapons sales. Overseas arms sales total \$66.3 billion in 2011 (more than three quarters of the global arms market), driven by major sales to authoritarian Persian Gulf states. A \$30 billion deal with Saudi Arabia was hailed by the secretary of state’s office as a boon for security and by Barack Obama as good for American jobs. By this standard, the true American crisis would be a decrease in military spending or a decline in global conflict.

The reality is that the world is very different place from what it was when Thomas Jefferson served as the first secretary of state or from 1648 when the Peace of Westphalia first articulated the sovereignty of the nation-state. George Washington in his farewell address urged the United States to steer clear of “inveterate antipathies” or “permanent alliances.” We now have both, most notably in the Middle East. The Israel lobby would have hated our first president.

Secretaries representing individual states aren’t well suited to today’s biggest problems. As the Capital Institute’s John Fullerton told me recently, “Three-and-a-half centuries later, with the rise of globalization in business, a global interconnected financial system, non-state terrorist actors with the power to upset global security, global epidemics and global environmental threats, Westphalian principles, like the Newtonian physics of its time, are no longer adequate.”

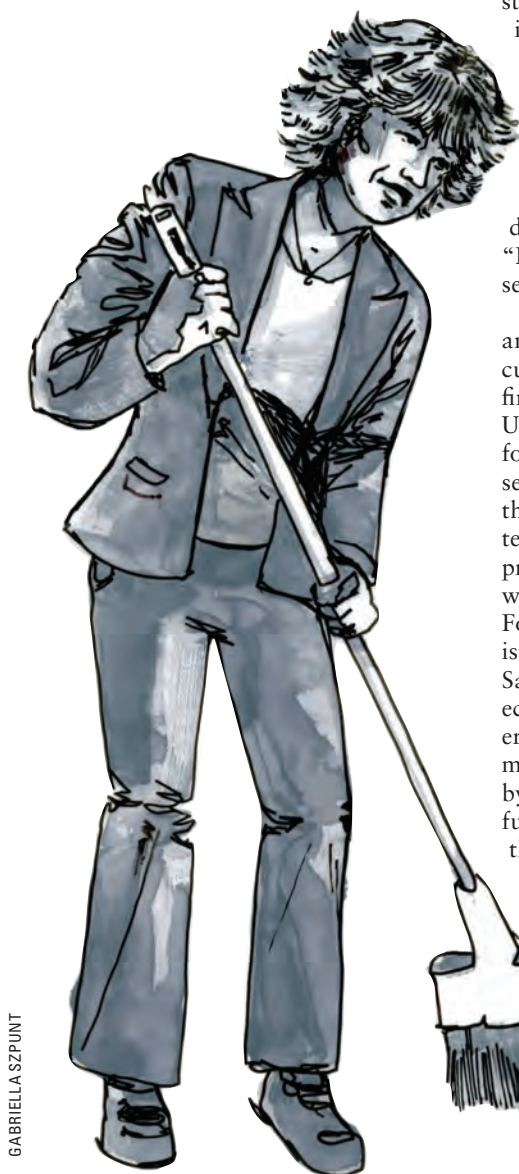
At the start of the last century novelist and essayist Virginia Woolf wrote, “As a woman I have no country. As a woman my country is the world.” That is even more true today. To quote author and foreign policy analyst Phyllis Bennis, the task is to “redefine what makes us safer: not bigger armies, more nukes, bigger corporations wreaking havoc and having other countries being afraid of us.” Interdependent states need to tackle global threats together. And perhaps stability shouldn’t be our sine qua non goal. After all, security is an illusion, as Eve Ensler of One Billion Rising and V-Day says, when one in three women will experience sexual assault or rape in her lifetime. If the status quo has brought us this far, why do we want more of the same?

Maybe the best place for a secretary of state is here at home. We need a secretary who clears the diplomatic air by delivering up U.S. war criminals for prosecution. As the “war on terror” is without definition or jurisdiction, the jury for such a case should similarly be global. How about American Anti-Idol live, online and let the world set the sentence?

Want to reduce poverty and hunger, make the world a less precarious place? When it comes to global “gun violence,” the National Rifle Association and its corporate partners can’t hold a candle to the Pentagon and theirs.

We need a secretary not of state but of the people. Now *that* might be something worth talking about.

Laura Flanders is the founder and director of GRITtv and a contributing writer to The Nation.



GABRIELLA SZPINT

# NO SCHOOL LEFT BEHIND



**BRIAN JONES**  
SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

As the new Secretary of Education, my first priority will be to reverse the trend toward the privatization of the public schools, to end the pervasive climate of fear and demoralization among the nation's educators and to urgently promote desegregation and genuine equality of resources and opportunity in all K-12 schools.

Toward this end, I will seek an immediate repeal of No Child Left Behind legislation and of the Race to the Top competition. Together, these have raised the stakes of standardized assessments beyond any reasonable proportion; narrowed the curriculum; created a culture of corruption; cheating and competition between schools; and have increased the trend toward teaching as a short-term job, not as a long-term profession. I will call for an end to high-stakes standardized testing and a moratorium on school closings. Just as we commit ourselves to teaching every single student, we will likewise commit ourselves to improving every single school.

Teachers must be trained in the very best practices and must be given the opportunity to learn from experienced educators during their training. In our highest-needs municipalities, students only rarely have teachers who are from their community, and teacher turnover is high. Teach for America cannot be the model of teacher training for our schools. Therefore, I will seek an end to Teach for America contracts with municipalities nationwide. Shortages must be addressed by strengthening our schools of education and by developing pathways to train community members to serve as educators in their schools.

We know that children learn best in stress-free, relaxed environments where they are given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge and understanding through meaningful, collaborative work. This requires clean, safe, attractive physical surroundings, small class sizes, well-trained educators and generous support services for students and for faculty. All students must have access to physical education, to science instruction and to the arts. We dare not spend millions more on testing, data analysis and teacher evaluation while we have not yet provided every teacher and every student with basic resources and opportunities.

As school funding remains a profound cause of educational inequality, I will direct my staff to prepare proposals for immediate revisions of tax codes that currently punish smaller and lower-income municipalities and to end the trend toward privatization and profiteering that has drained school

budgets nationwide. I will propose a moratorium on the further proliferation of charter schools and review the possibility of re-absorbing many of them into the public system. Charter schools have become notorious for failing to serve students with special needs. My administration will ensure that special education services are robust and fully funded.

Since identity is so important to a child's development, we must ensure that schools are responsive to the communities they serve. Toward this goal, I will seek an end to mayoral control of schools in municipalities across the country and encourage the development of transparency, democracy and parent power in day-to-day school policy and culture. Every community has something to contribute to its schools and the school must respect and welcome the community's voice. As a nation of immigrants, we have tremendous linguistic diversity. All students must have the opportunity to become literate in their native languages and to learn new languages as well.

To improve teaching and learning, we must empower teachers and learners. Teachers must have greater latitude to exercise professional judgement in their duties. The Common Core standards are untested and therefore unproven as a means of improving teaching and learning. Too many teachers suffer under cookie-cutter formulas, checklists and the pressure to raise test scores. Such mandates are too easily misused as a tool to punish teachers, instead of as an instrument of professional development. To improve teaching and learning, I will begin pilot programs that alter the structure of the school day to allow educators more time for reflection, collaboration and for professional development. At the same time, beginning in the earliest grades, students must have greater opportunity to shape the course of their studies and to follow their own interests and passions.

At all levels, teachers and students should participate in councils that can help govern their school and resolve conflicts. Heavy policing and other so-called "zero-tolerance" methods cannot ensure the safety of our schools. I will call for an immediate moratorium on all arrests of students and promote the proliferation of collective, collaborative safety programs, such as Restorative Justice.

Many of our students and their families have been devastated by the economic crisis. Unemployment, homelessness, debt and other urgent family problems are harmful to teaching and learning. My office will seek funding to help schools nationwide to become well-equipped community centers that can offer support services to families in need. There is no reason for these services to be provided by charity. Like public education itself, the health of families is a matter of the public good and should be included in the public budget.

The United States of America is the wealthiest nation in human history. It is my firm belief that, by changing our priorities, we can afford to pursue these initiatives and many more.



LYNNE FOSTER

## Semiotics for All!

**LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF**  
SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



It is obvious today that the first act of any responsible secretary of education in this country should be to abolish all private education. Democracy, which is what we say we are, and in fact what we say we lead the world in, requires an informed citizenry with a highly developed capacity to discern well-argued, data-laden, eloquently structured bullshit. We cannot have a country in which only some of the citizenry, i.e. those who can afford to attend Brown University and major in semiotics, are capable of discerning bullshit while the rest can be led to believe that fiscal cliffs can be averted by tax evasions for the rich. In fact, this situation is exactly backward: the students at Brown University (an institution I attended, by the way, and thus can affectionately lambaste) have vested interests inclining them to overlook bullshit in too many cases, while those who could never afford Brown have both the direct interest and the greatest need to analyze bullshit.

My first task as secretary of Education will therefore be to mandate public education for all, a move that will motivate middle class parents to address our educational challenges with all the zeal they put into writing their children's college application essays. And it might even result in getting us some copying machines that work up at CUNY.

This is not as pie-in-the-sky as some may think. Before the enforced impoverishment programs of neo-liberal governments, many countries, not just European ones, had free public educational institutions at all levels without private competition. The trade-off was that not all students were able to attend, and merit-based entry favored upper classes. Clearly a democracy requires universal education, not a pyramid scheme where the poor and working classes learn only rudimentary skills.

The point of universal education is not uplift of the suffering masses from their unenlightened state, but improvement of our country's knowledge base. Not until the G.I. Bill, civil rights laws, and affirmative action began to democratize our educational system did scholars begin exploring racism in medical history, gender disparities in wage levels, or the concept of a social history tracking the lives of ordinary people. Educating everybody would shake things up in regard to what we think we know.

Twenty years ago Toni Morrison said, "Is this country willing to sabotage its cities and school systems if they're occupied mostly by black people? It seems so." Tax-free private schools that ensure peonage for those parents and students who take on enormous debts to afford them sabotage the lives of our brightest, most ambitious poor of all colors.

I say, storm the gates, open up the admissions offices, pull the ivy off the walls if we have to, but for God's sake, let's make public education excellent, universal, and unchallenged. Semiotics for all!

Linda Alcoff is a professor of philosophy at the City University of New York (CUNY) and the current president of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division. She attended Brown as a fully funded graduate student, sorely impressed by the superior vocabulary of her students.

Brian Jones has taught elementary grades in New York City's public schools for nine years, and is a member of the Movement of Rank and File Educators (the social justice caucus of the United Federation of Teachers). Brian is a doctoral student in urban education at the CUNY Graduate Center, and has contributed to several books, including Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation.

## A NEW OPENING

My first act as Obama's new head of the Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs would be to heed the drum that a vast array of LGBT and human rights activists pounded all last year and put some damned LGBT non-discrimination policies in place, as Obama has failed to do despite his 2008 campaign promises. (Yes, DADT is certainly a fine beginning, but it took him until the third year of his first term to get on it, activists had to push him uphill the entire way, and it still allows discrimination against transgender servicemembers.)

The President could start by signing the executive order he refused to sign last April — the one that would ban federal contractors from discriminating against employees based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Of course, his inaction ticked off activists like Heather Cronk, managing director of GetEQUAL, who calls it "shameful that the United States government still chooses

to accept the premise that it's okay to fire someone simply for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender." But preventing taxpayer-funded workplace discrimination is such a no-brainer that even the *New York Times* Editorial page was peeved by the president's punting.

As political strategist Paul Yandura and blogger Joe Sudbay noted in a recent post, "This executive order has been awaiting his signature for over two years now. He could do it this week, and it would be a historic first step toward federal employment protections." It would also, according to Tico Almeida, President of the LGBT organization Freedom to Work, "give the U.S. Labor Department strong enforcement powers to seek back wages and reinstatement for LGBT workers who are fired for discriminatory reasons."

Just as important are the ways that the executive order would, as Yandura told me, provide "the smartest step and best pathway we have toward passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act."

ENDA would offer the broadest possible protections for transgender and nonconforming people and has been languishing in Congress since 1994. As of now, only 16 states and the District of Columbia have statutes that protect against both sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in employment in the public and private sector. And, as Almeida pointed out, "The order will also trigger national news stories pointing out congressional inaction on this issue, and that will help our movement with one of our biggest ENDA hurdles — the fact that 90 percent of Americans mistakenly believe ENDA has already become law."

Yandura also noted that the existing executive orders that protect minorities but exclude LGBT Americans, originated years



**NANCY GOLDSTEIN**  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT

before Congress got it together to pass federal legislation and were the impetus for that change. These orders create a strong foundation for legislation later passed by Congress. According to Nan Hunter, a lesbian law professor at Georgetown University, "History has shown executive orders for non discrimination often precede changes in law." So there is a strong historic precedent for signing a similar order to protect LGBT Americans to create a pathway to passage of ENDA. Moreover, if the President signs a revised executive order now, almost a quarter of the U.S. workforce will have already lived under similar LGBT employment protections by the time ENDA does finally come up for a vote. That should go a long way toward undercutting any fear-based arguments used against it by homophobic and transphobic lawmakers.

So good morning, Mr. President, and welcome to your second term. I super appreciate this new gig and the free seltzer in the OPE kitchen. And now I've got some papers for you to sign.

.....  
*Nancy Goldstein's work has appeared in venues including the Guardian, The Nation, the Daily Beast, NPR, Politico, Salon, Slate, the American Prospect and the Washington Post, where she was an Editor's Pick and the winner of the blogging round during their Next Great Pundit Contest. You can follow her on Twitter at @nancygoldstein.*



DOND/J

## CRACKING THE CONVERSATION

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CHAIRMAN  
FEDERAL  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMISSION

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.....  
*Flux Rostrum has traveled the country for more than a decade living in vehicles while performing the duty of a good video ninja and web monkey. He is the founder MobileBroadcastNews.com a co-founder of GlobalRevolution.tv.*

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## THE BIG ICE THAW

ARLENE DAVILA

DIRECTOR

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

My first order of business as director of ICE during Obama's second-term cabinet is to immediately ban the use of "illegal" to refer to any undocumented person of any status in this country in any official and unofficial communication. ICE strongly believes that inhumane language debases our mission and should be immediately eradicated. By the same token, racist anti-immigration provisions that promote racial profiling and criminalize people just for living while "undocumented" — such as Alabama's HB 56 and Arizona's SB 1070 — will be rendered unconstitutional.

We will instantly turn to developing a comprehensive immigration reform that will adjust the status of the undocumented to "permanent residents" and that provides a realistic, feasible and affordable path to U.S. citizenship to all undocumented immigrants. The Dream Act will be immediately approved, without preconditions of military service or enrollment in an institution of higher learning.

Foremost, the new ICE is aware that people leave their countries out of economic need and desperation, and we will work closely with other branches of government to develop fair global economic policies that allow sustainable livelihoods for all. This includes fair-trade agreements that do not compete unfairly with rural and agricultural workers as did NAFTA and that do not decimate local industries. In particular, global corporations seeking to invest in the developing world will be required to provide living wages and safe working environments to workers. Additionally the new ICE is committed to avoiding future foreign invasions and interventions in the name of profit, capital and U.S. corporations in order to avoid generating more "harvests of empire," as Juan Gonzalez terms immigrants.

Finally, our Border Enforcement Security will be retrained to help with the task of family reunification and status adjustment of immigrants, prioritizing the victims of the unprecedented number of deportations initiated under Obama's first term. We estimate that after we achieve economic stability across the border the work of the Border Enforcement Security will become largely expendable.



Arlene Davila writes about Latino/Latin American contemporary issues and teaches anthropology and American Studies at New York University.

GINO BARZIZZA



## ENDING THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE

BEN MANSKI

DIRECTOR

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Did you, too, O friend, suppose democracy was only for elections, for politics, and for a party name? I say democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruit in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between [people], and their beliefs — in religion, literature, colleges and schools — democracy in all public and private life...

— WALT WHITMAN

Democracy Commission in the convening of constitutional conventions shall be to encourage and make transparent the existing amendment process.

**The implementation and enforcement of the Voter Bill of Rights, as enacted by Congress, as well as existing voting rights and election law.** The Voter Bill of Rights is a 10-point consensus platform of the modern day voting rights movement and may be read in its current incarnation at [nomorestolenlections.org](http://nomorestolenlections.org).

**Ensuring federal support for the principles of democratic federalism, in which environmental, human rights, education, and commercial laws and regulations enacted by our national government are understood to establish a floor, not a ceiling, to actions by our state and local governments.** This means, for example, that the Federal Democracy Commission will intervene to ensure that the federal government will encourage local and state reforms such as public utilities, community wireless, wage and hour minimums, clean

water, human rights, and standards and services that are more ambitious than those offered by higher levels of government.

**Strengthening the practice of economic democracy through public education, publicity, training and direct financing for cooperative development and for democratic reforms** intended to make government agencies, private associations, and business enterprises more participatory.

The Federal Democracy Commission is an independent, nonpartisan regulatory agency. Its six commissioners are nonpartisan, meaning that those who have run for partisan office, worked for a political party, or served as an officer of a registered political party may not serve as commissioners. The commissioners are nominated by a select committee that includes one representative of each political party that has won at least 1 percent of the national vote in the previous election cycle. Those nominated are then appointed by the President and approved by Congress.



Ben Manski is the executive director of the Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution, a pro-democracy strategy center he founded in 2004. He is a former co-chair of the Green Party of the United States, and this past year was Jill Stein's presidential campaign manager. Manski will serve as the executive secretary of the Federal Democracy Commission administrative, as he is disqualified from serving as a commissioner.





## PUTTING A NEW FOOD SYSTEM ON THE TABLE



**NANCY ROMER**

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Can you imagine a food system that is centered around the local and regional production of healthy food for all people? I can, and as secretary of Agriculture I will pursue transformative policies that are framed by the overlapping contexts of climate change, inequality, racism, corporate domination and the need for food democracy. Significant defunding of the present military budget by my new colleagues at the Pentagon should provide sufficient support for the changes we need to make.

The current food and agricultural system contributes one-third of all greenhouse gases, so we must change how we grow, process and distribute food. As we strengthen local and regional food production, we will swiftly transition away from agriculture that requires fossil fuel-based pesticides and fertilizers. Subsidies to massive monocrop/heavy input farms will be shifted to medium-sized and small farms using agro-ecological practices. Programs supporting sustainable agriculture and diverse scales of farms need to grow, such as specialty crop, beginning farmer, organic and value-added programs.

Guided by the principle of “food sovereignty”—control of our food system by the people within a community—medium-sized and small farms are more able to incorporate agro-ecological practices and to meet the needs of their local food economies. The overproduction of corn, soy, wheat and rice (most of which are genetically engineered and require enormous amounts of water to irrigate) will end with the sunset of subsidies for these commodity crops. This will eliminate the de facto subsidy to concentrated livestock farming. Confined Animal Factory Operations (CAFOs) doling out inhumane treatment and growth hormone- and antibiotic-laced feed will be phased out within a short time. The official policy of the USDA will be to gradually wean ourselves off heavy meat consumption; meat production must be regulated to ensure healthy meat for consumers and better treatment of animals.

### INEQUALITY AND RACISM

At the new USDA, inequality and racism, in the present food system will be addressed. A massive jobs program with adequate wages, benefits and rights would bring millions of people out of poverty and provide them with incomes to purchase food. In the interim, we need to expand the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP),

previously known as food stamps, as well as the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC). Incentives to purchase food at farmers markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms and food coops must also be expanded. Providing healthy, fresh food is a powerful way for our government to invest in the lives of our people, to equalize opportunity for children and to prepare a healthy, stable population for the future. Higher expenditures for these programs now will result in savings in health care, education, unemployment and incarceration down the line.

Agricultural and domestic workers, left out of the National Labor Relations Act and Social Security laws, should now be included, giving them the right to organize and protect their interests. Minimum wages, decent working conditions and Social Security should be applied to these workers, most of whom are people of color and/or immigrants. Lifting up food workers, often the lowest paid with the fewest benefits and rights, will help eliminate hunger and poverty.

We must also be sure to support the wide range of conservation measures, including crop rotation and siting wildlife and windbreaks on or near farmland to promote biodiversity and soil conservation and defend against climate change. Hydraulic fracturing for mining of natural gas must be banned to prevent catastrophic poisoning of our water tables and farmland.

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) must be established and supported in all cities and counties and should be connected through state FPC networks. These councils will include community, farmer, worker, government and business interests with the heaviest representation from marginalized groups most affected by our present broken food system. These councils will contribute to planning a more localized food system that meets the needs of the people in the region: food sovereignty!

The survival and security of our people and our nation depend upon the food and nutrition security of everyone on the planet. The United States can lead in the development of sound food policies that support this goal. We can minimize climate change, adapt to it as it unfolds, create a more equitable society and live more harmoniously with nature, the ultimate judge and jury of our future. We can set an example and bring these practices to international agreements supported by the United Nations and other international bodies. We have a world to save and we can do a great deal of that through food and agriculture led by our communities and supported by our government.



Nancy Romer is a co-founder of the Brooklyn Food Coalition ([brooklynfoodcoalition.org](http://brooklynfoodcoalition.org)).



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# ONE THING BEFORE I'M FIRED

**BILL MCKIBBEN**  
SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Now that I've been named secretary of energy, let me tell you my first order of business: no more kowtowing to the fossil fuel industry. We're done being the enablers of the coal and gas and oil industry, and we're ready to tell the truth to the American people about the damage they're doing to communities, to landscapes, and most of all to the climate.

If I can get one thing done before I'm fired, it will be to help stoke opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline. I know I serve at the President's pleasure, but I serve at my pleasure too, and I simply can't be part of an administration that will approve a project opposed by all the nation's top climate scientists, a project that will help open up a vast new source of carbon, a project that will pour yet more money into the pockets of the Koch brothers.

Once the President has blocked Keystone, he'll have real credibility with the broad environmental movement, which is good, because there's an awful lot that we need to get done together. Powerful new EPA regulations to protect communities — especially poor communities — from the effects of soot and ozone and the asthma that comes with burning coal. A serious fee-and-dividend system that makes it clear we own the sky, not Exxon — and that finally puts a real price on carbon. A feed-in tariff system modeled on Germany's, which has installed so much renewable energy that some days last summer half the country's power came from solar panels. An end to research on oxymorons like "clean coal" and a massive increase in money for truly transformative research and development.

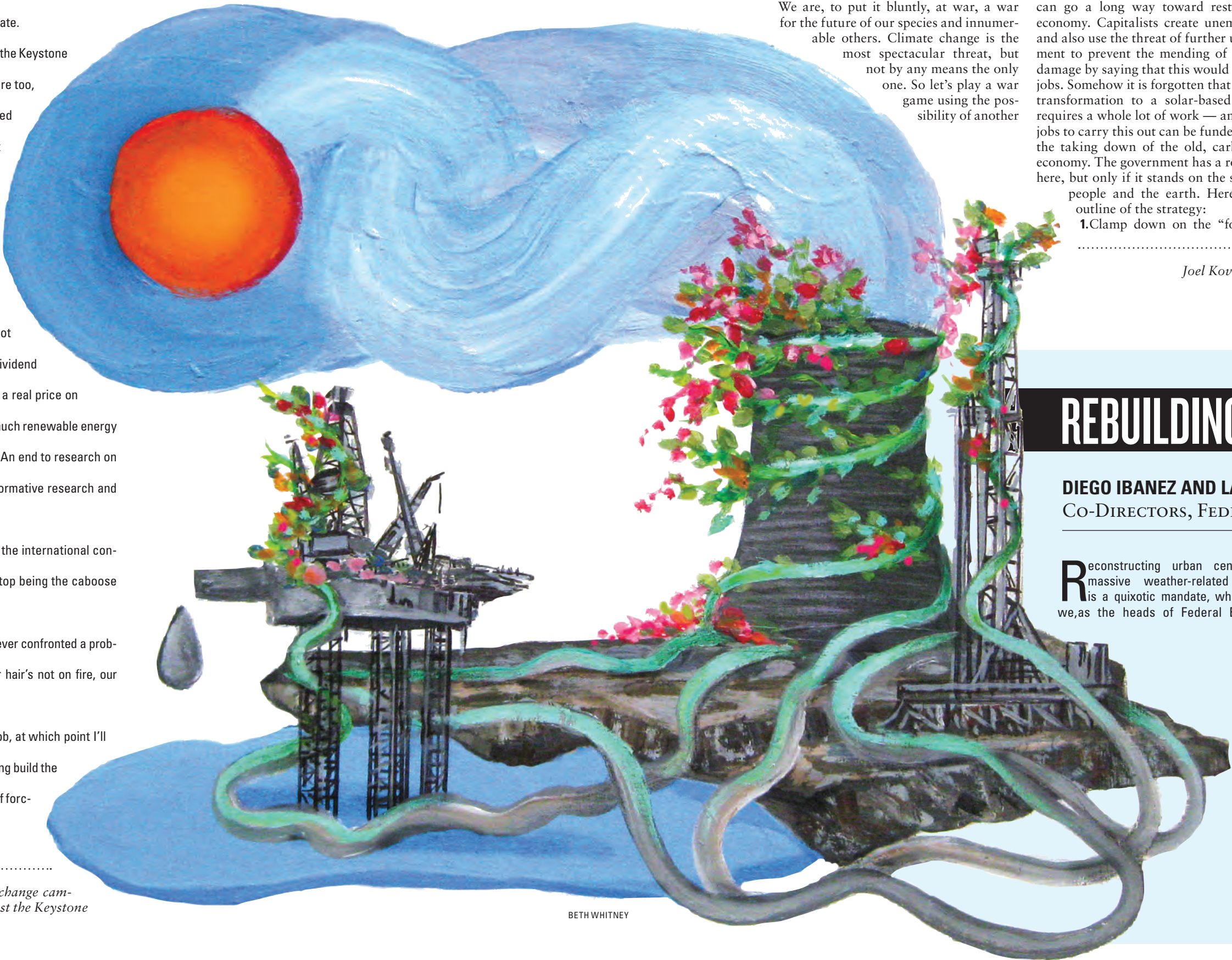
And as we're dealing with our own troubles, we also have to get back into the international conversation. We're not going to be leaders any time soon, but at least we can stop being the caboose on the train. (Speaking of trains, we need some of those too!).

As secretary of energy, I'll be saying every single day: "Human beings have never confronted a problem as deep as global warming. If our hair's not on fire, our planet soon will be. Let's get to work."

I'm assuming this will cost me my job, at which point I'll get back to the real task, which is helping build the mass movement that is our only hope of forcing policy change!



Bill McKibben is the founder of 350.org, the first big global climate change campaign. It operates in 191 countries and has spearheaded the fight against the Keystone pipeline and the drive for divestment from fossil fuel companies.



**JOEL KOVEL**  
DIRECTOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The Environmental Protection Agency has been a political football since its founding in 1970, kicked back and forth between liberal environmentalists and big business, the latter quite content to sacrifice civilization and nature on the altar of profits, the former temporizing and nibbling away at the edges of ecocatastrophe. With the recent resignation of Administrator Lisa Jackson, the struggle enters a new phase of danger and opportunity: the hallmarks of crisis.

EPA that would engage militantly in what it's supposed to do: protect the environment. This would include vigilance and perseverance in enforcing the existing regulations to limit contaminants in the air, water or soil.

But there is a much bigger challenge before us. It's nothing less than an energy transformation, bringing down the carbon-based sources that spell climate doom and replacing them with solar-based renewables. A vitalized EPA can play a major role in the transition, which, not incidentally,

We are, to put it bluntly, at war, a war for the future of our species and innumerable others. Climate change is the most spectacular threat, but not by any means the only one. So let's play a war game using the possibility of another

can go a long way toward restoring our economy. Capitalists create unemployment and also use the threat of further unemployment to prevent the mending of ecological damage by saying that this would take away jobs. Somehow it is forgotten that an energy transformation to a solar-based economy requires a whole lot of work — and that the jobs to carry this out can be funded through the taking down of the old, carbon-based economy. The government has a role to play here, but only if it stands on the side of the people and the earth. Here's a brief outline of the strategy:

1.Clamp down on the "four horse-

men" of the climate change apocalypse: offshore petroleum extraction, especially in deeper waters; mountaintop removal coal mining; hydrofracking for natural gas; and tar sands extraction and transport by Keystone XL, from Alberta to Texas now, and wherever else these processes will occur. The EPA has plenty of tools to put the kibosh on these murderous technologies. All it takes is some principled action. There are lots of activists who would help out.

something worthwhile.

5. Use the funds to create a national program, substantially planned and administered locally, to transition to an energy grid of solar and wind power.

6. Obama might stand in the way. But (like FDR) hasn't he urged us to present him with powerful movements that would compel him to act?

There will be a lot of details to work out. It will be exciting and, for a big change, hopeful.

# A FRESH BREATH OF CLEAN AIR

It could even lead to a revolution. And isn't that what many of us have been asking for?



Joel Kovel is author of The Enemy of Nature and a founder of Ecosocialist Horizons (ecosocialisthorizons.com)

# REBUILDING THE REBUILDERS

**DIEGO IBANEZ AND LAURA GOTTESDIENER**  
CO-DIRECTORS, FEDERAL OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Reconstructing urban centers after massive weather-related disasters is a quixotic mandate, which is why we, as the heads of Federal Emergency

Management Agency, will construct a wind farm in the water off the eastern coast of the city as part of our comprehensive New York City reconstruction plan. To jump-start reconstruction, all residents in affected areas with children under the age of 18 or elderly or disabled family members will immediately receive a \$20,000 voucher to do repairs and mold remediation to avoid long-term illnesses. This plan will also enact a one-year moratorium on evictions, foreclosures and residential property sales in affected areas in order to forestall vulture capitalism. (FEMA loans will be made available to assist landlords if they can demonstrate considerable financial hardship as a result of the moratorium.) In order to alleviate the housing and displacement crisis, we will also place pressure on the mayor's office to begin an immediate count of all vacant properties within city

limits, as well as pressure the city council to reinstate urban homesteading laws to permit the immediate use of any property that has stood vacant for more than 10 years.

We will also invest \$20 billion of FEMA's New York City budget in green energy technology and infrastructure with the goal of powering 20 percent of residential properties using wind and solar energy on a separate collective energy grid by 2015. The agency will also enact tighter employment quotas for all contract companies receiving FEMA funds: 80 percent of the workers must be local, 50 percent must be of color and 40 percent must be women. FEMA will spend \$30 million on daycare centers and after-school programs in affected communities. Furthermore, we immediately change the agency's policy toward undocumented persons, who will now be entitled to receive full FEMA assistance.

Diego Ibanez is an organizer with Occupy Sandy. Laura Gottesdiener is a freelance journalist and one of the co-producers of Sandy Storyline (sandystoryline.com).

**JOEL KOVEL**  
DIRECTOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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1. Clamp down on the "four horse-

2. Begin moving to the carbon tax that many countries around the world are initiating. The EPA has a shot at being able to initiate this. Combine it with elimination of the worthless "cap-and-trade" system that has served to mystify the possibilities of enlightened state action. A tax of \$20/ton of carbon could raise \$125 billion.
3. Set aside a portion of this to protect poor and working people from the higher prices of carbon fuels.
4. Combine the rest with \$100 billion raised through cuts in the military — the most wasteful and toxic part of society. Now we have a nice sum with which to do

ful. It could even lead to a revolution. And isn't that what many of us have been asking for?



Joel Kovel is author of *The Enemy of Nature* and a founder of *Ecosocialist Horizons* ([ecosocialisthorizons.com](http://ecosocialisthorizons.com))

## REBUILDING THE REBUILDERS

**DIEGO IBANEZ AND LAURA GOTTESDIENER**  
CO-DIRECTORS, FEDERAL OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

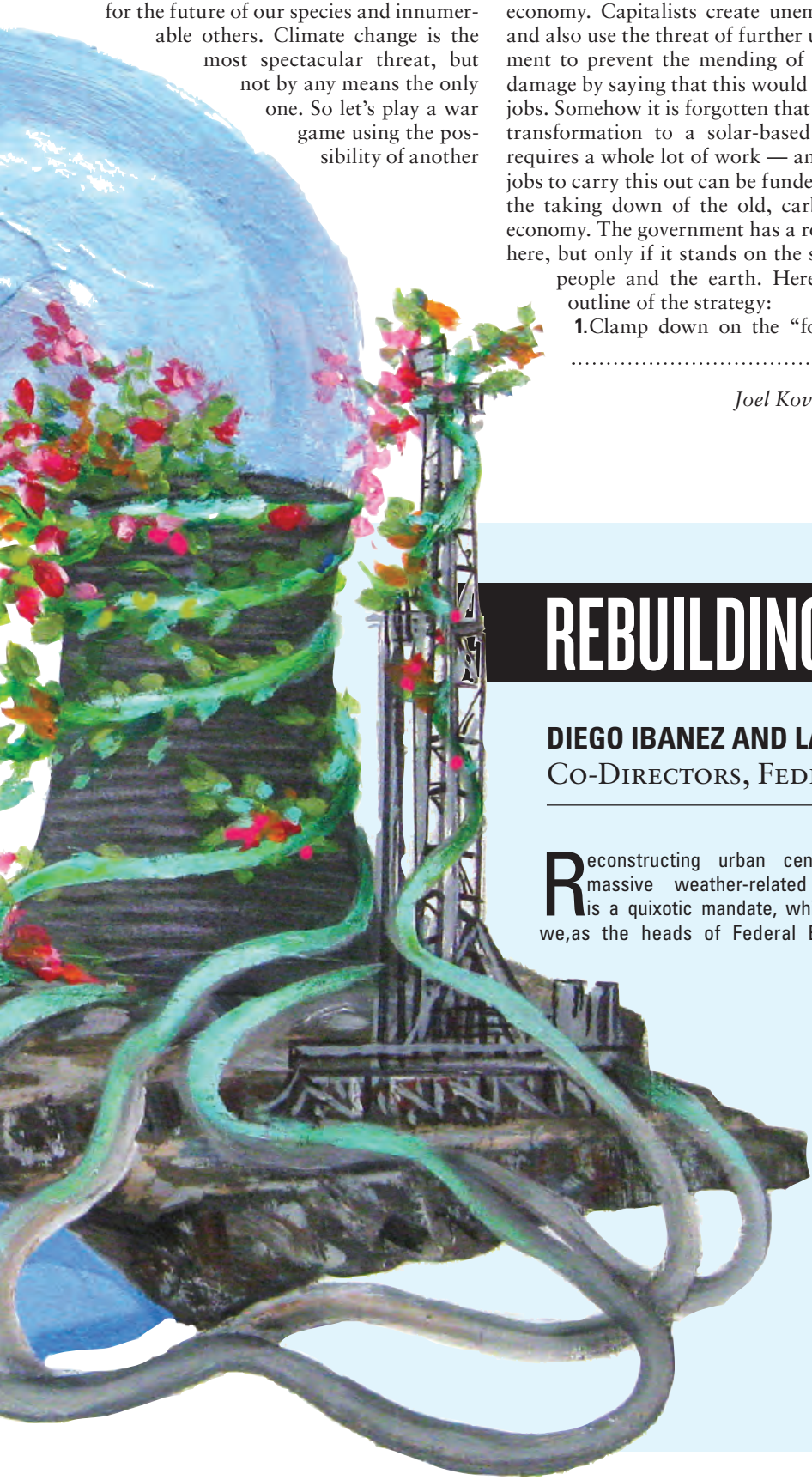
Reconstructing urban centers after massive weather-related disasters is a quixotic mandate, which is why we, as the heads of Federal Emergency

Management Agency, will construct a wind farm in the water off the eastern coast of the city as part of our comprehensive New York City reconstruction plan. To jump-start reconstruction, all residents in affected areas with children under the age of 18 or elderly or disabled family members will immediately receive a \$20,000 voucher to do repairs and mold remediation to avoid long-term illnesses. This plan will also enact a one-year moratorium on evictions, foreclosures and residential property sales in affected areas in order to forestall vulture capitalism. (FEMA loans will be made available to assist landlords if they can demonstrate considerable financial hardship as a result of the moratorium.) In order to alleviate the housing and displacement crisis, we will also place pressure on the mayor's office to begin an immediate count of all vacant properties within city

limits, as well as pressure the city council to reinstate urban homesteading laws to permit the immediate use of any property that has stood vacant for more than 10 years.

We will also invest \$20 billion of FEMA's New York City budget in green energy technology and infrastructure with the goal of powering 20 percent of residential properties using wind and solar energy on a separate collective energy grid by 2015. The agency will also enact tighter employment quotas for all contract companies receiving FEMA funds: 80 percent of the workers must be local, 50 percent must be of color and 40 percent must be women. FEMA will spend \$30 million on daycare centers and after-school programs in affected communities. Furthermore, we immediately change the agency's policy toward undocumented persons, who will now be entitled to receive full FEMA assistance.

Diego Ibanez is an organizer with *Occupy Sandy*. Laura Gottesdiener is a freelance journalist and one of the co-producers of *Sandy Storyline* ([sandystoryline.com](http://sandystoryline.com)).



# BREAKING UP WITH ISRAEL

## REMI KANAZI SPECIAL ENVOY TO PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Israel is an apartheid state  
but you know this  
bulldozing homes, displacing the indigenous  
expanding settlements, checkpoints, and colonizer roads  
controlling imports, exports, the air, the sea, and “buffer zones”  
firing at fisherman, gunning down children  
shelling ambulances and buildings filled with journalists  
this is what emboldened occupiers do with our protection

you are the commander and chief weapons supplier  
veto inside and outside of the U.N.  
the billion-dollar best friend  
continuing a corrupted legacy  
laid out by presidents who came before you

what oppressors learn from history is to repeat it  
build upon its cruelty  
we don’t need to transport ourselves  
back to your days in Chicago  
play recordings of Reverend Wright  
unearth support before political consciousness  
was bought out by corporate dollars  
consumer-friendly campaign slogans  
drawn up in PR-presentable packaging

white phosphorus tore at Palestinian flesh  
as you waited for inauguration  
schools, mosques, and water wells were shelled  
as your mouth was blockaded  
transitioning from silent actor  
to active participant

the road to Palestinian rights  
is not through the White House  
it never has been  
no advice will change your mind  
no appeal will bring back a heartbeat  
to your conscience  
you are a mirage Democrats  
keep crawling back to  
there is no quick fix  
no replacement for  
grassroots mass movement

the way forward is clear  
heeding the call of Palestinian civil society  
boycott, divestment, and sanctions

from Dublin to Cape Town  
global people of conscience  
rising up to cut corporate complicity  
HP, Motorola, Sodastream  
Aroma, Ahava, and GE  
U.S. and Israeli companies  
profiting off of suffering

this letter is not a coin  
in the wishing well  
or a final plea  
before I resign  
Palestinians will be free  
that is an inevitability

when you are old and gray  
and looking back on your presidency  
many of us will remember where you stood  
and we will sleep well knowing  
that even as the hope and change candidate  
reinforced an indigenous people’s suffering  
the world knew better  
fists knocked down walls  
resistance wrote the pages of history  
and the shackles of Israeli oppression  
remain relics in a museum  
abhorring the principles you stood for



Remi Kanazi is a poet, writer, and activist. He is author of Poetic Injustice: Writings on Resistance and Palestine and the editor of Poets For Palestine. He is on the organizing committee for the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.

## ALEX KANE SPECIAL ENVOY TO PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

What a tangled mess I’ve inherited. As special envoy to Palestine and Israel, I have my work cut out. It will be a hard journey, but I’m determined to forge a better way for the people of Israel, Palestine, the Middle East and the United States.

I assume office at a time of great upheaval in the Middle East. The Arab revolutionary wave has swept governments from power in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, while the Syrian civil war grinds on with catastrophic consequences. There are those who say that this unstable political climate means that we must postpone action on the Israel/Palestine front. But those people are wrong. If anything, the Arab revolutionary wave has exposed Israel’s regional weakness. It would in fact be in Israel’s best interests to address the roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict before it creeps up on them with consequences the state cannot shape.

On the Israel/Palestine front specifically, the challenges remain daunting. I have to deal with a number of vexing developments that have pushed the possibility of a just settlement between Israelis and Palestinians to the farthest reaches of the mind. Nobody thinks peace is possible with a divided Palestinian polity, settlement-boosting right-wing Israeli government and a U.S. government determined to back Israel and shield it from the consequences of its actions.

Where do I come in? Coming from an outsider, my attempts to address internal political developments in Palestine and Israel will likely fail. But my appointment has already shown that possibilities exist for a radically different U.S. path on this issue. The Israel lobby raised its ugly head to smear me, but the President bucked them for the first time.

So my role will primarily address U.S. involvement and complicity in the perpetuation of the conflict. For decades, the United States has backed Israel unconditionally as it systematically violated international law by building West Bank colonies that sliced and diced the territory slated to be a

Palestinian state. This will change when I take the helm as special envoy to the region.

The main policy plank I plan on pursuing is to extricate the United States from its deep complicity with Israeli war crimes. I will send a message to the prime minister of Israel saying that if you do not take steps to stop the growth of settlements, ease the blockade of Gaza and begin a process of dismantling illegal colonies in the West Bank, U.S. military aid and diplomatic protection will be in jeopardy. If the United States is continually rebuffed, I will lobby Congress to support legislation that would cut aid to Israel and encourage the United States to support efforts for a peaceful solution based on international law at the United Nations. Whether this will be a one-state or a two-state solution is up to the international community, and ultimately the Israelis and Palestinians. But the time for U.S. leadership on this issue is now — and we’ll begin with looking at Israel’s criminal behavior.

These policies are no panacea — there is no magic bullet to solve the Israel/Palestine conflict. But the festering wound of Palestinian statelessness and displacement harms Americans as well as Palestinians and Israelis. The U.S. image in the Middle East will remain dismal as long as we continue to support Israel unconditionally. This affects the region’s instability and Washington’s ability to lead in other areas. And it provides fuel to Islamic extremists who are outraged at Israel’s treatment of Palestinians.

For all those reasons, it is important to shift U.S. policy to a more even-handed approach. The time to end U.S. complicity with Israel’s land-grabbing machine is now.



Alex Kane is an associate editor at the news website Mondo-weiss and the World section editor for AlterNet.



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31 Third Ave.

Mamoun's Falafel Restaurant  
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Housing Works  
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Shakespeare & Co.  
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Hudson Park Library  
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George Bruce Library  
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W. 156th St. & Amsterdam

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Brooklyn Library  
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Long Island University  
1 University Plaza

Tea Lounge  
Union St. & Seventh Ave.

Verb Café  
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.

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# EMPTY THE SHELTERS, FILL THE HOMES



**CHERI HONKALA**

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT

My first order of business as the new Housing and Urban Development secretary will be to end homelessness and revamp the HOPE VI grant program. Currently, there are more abandoned properties in this country than there are homeless people, and the solution is obvious: combine the two. Dr. Jill Stein and I ran on a platform of the Green New Deal, which is based on the principle that all Americans have a right to safe, decent and accessible affordable housing. I will work to further this goal.

Current HUD programs are grossly inadequate and have massive undesirable consequences. A salient example is the failed HOPE VI program. This program, begun in 1993, was designed to revitalize and remedy problems with public housing by departing from the former “housing project” model and moving toward mixed-use development. While a laudable goal, the program has failed and has only made the housing crisis for America’s poor worse. Grants are being used to demolish existing public housing in order to rebuild new “mixed-use” units. There is, however, no requirement that the new construction have a “one-to-one” replacement of the former housing units. Additionally, “mixed use” has been used to develop mixed-income housing, which shrinks the number of units available to the poor and amounts to nothing less than the usurpation of housing from the poor to be given at subsidized rates to the middle class.

The result of this failed program, in cities from Louisville, Ky., and Columbus, Ohio, to the Bay Area in California, is the displacement of U.S. families who can least afford

such a change. Families are being uprooted from communities they have lived in for generations and shipped to remote communities without access to transit or employment centers and in many cases left homeless. Rather than solving problems with low-income housing, the HOPE VI program merely hides the poor from the view.

I will immediately institute a moratorium on the disbursement of any further HOPE VI monies. The requirements for obtaining such a grant must be amended. In the first instance, the demolition of housing should be a last resort. Many units have been family homes for generations, and the immoral destruction of these homes must end. In those instances where rebuilding is the best option, the program must require a one-to-one replacement of any demolished unit. Furthermore, these new units must be reserved for low-income families who depend on public housing. Finally, the siting of additional or new units must be in urban centers with access to transit and jobs and not in undesirable and remote areas that burden residents with crippling commutes.

As my first order of business, I will END homelessness by housing our veterans, our seniors and our low-income families. We will empty the shelters and fill the homes!

The recommendations above are but the beginning: With the Green New Deal we could make all of this and more a reality. I invite you all to follow Jill Stein and me this year as we work with others to bring the Green New deal to life and make it a reality because the next generation deserves just that!



ROB LAQUINTA

*Cheri Honkala is a nationally known advocate for the poor and homeless, co-founder of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and co-founder and National Coordinator of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. She was the Green Party's nominee for vice president in the 2012 U.S. presidential election.*

**SARAH JAFFE**

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The very first thing I would do upon taking office as secretary of labor would be to get some comfortable shoes, find the biggest and loudest and most vibrant picket line — strike, lock-out, wherever workers are fighting for their rights — and join in. Because ultimately, though good legislation and good executive branch work helps, really, what will revitalize labor is the workers taking the struggle into their own hands.

That said, here's a few ideas that I'd push for, in addition to deeper, better, stronger and fiercer enforcement of laws holding bosses accountable for how they treat their workforce. It's so far beyond time to raise the minimum wage that it's a joke, and a good secretary of labor would lead that fight — I'd say to about \$15 an hour and index it to inflation so we're never stuck in this place again. A domestic workers' bill of rights on a national scale, modeled after



GB MARTIN

New York's own, giving domestic workers labor protections. Stronger protections for farmworkers as well — these two types of work were deliberately left out of the National Labor Relations Act because at the time they were jobs done by people of color, and they deserve protections.

I'd pull together the smartest team of experts and advisers and strategists I could find and come up with a labor law reform that would really make an impact — take the good bits of the Employee Free Choice Act, really look at what else we could fix and come up with a package that would stop some of the bleeding from states like Wisconsin and Michigan and Indiana where Republican governors have hacked away union rights.

And finally, it's time to revamp how we do unemployment insurance, too. Like most of our social safety net, it's tied to one's (former) job in a way that leaves too many people vulnerable. With unemployment still high and jobs still too scarce, it's past time to start talking about an idea from the Nixon administration — a guaranteed minimum income/universal basic income. Nothing gives people power at work like not being terrified of being out of work.

*Sarah Jaffe is an independent journalist, a rabblouser and contributor to Truthout, AlterNet, The Nation, Jacobin and others. Follow her exploits on Twitter: @sarahljaffe.*

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## THE OLD GUARD

Obama's first-term cabinet gave a few celebrity politicians, like Hillary Clinton, the spotlight; for others, witness protection couldn't have hidden them more. Here's a look at some of greatest\* hits from the Obama cabinet's first four years. *\*worst*

### SECRETARY OF STATE

HILLARY CLINTON (2009 – JANUARY 2013)

Before she was the First Lady, New York Senator and 2008 almost-nominee, Hillary Clinton played another role: during her time as Arkansas First Lady, she served on the board of mega-corporation Wal-Mart for six fruitful years. As Obama's powerful secretary of state, Clinton called dictators friends ("I really consider [Egyptian] President and Mrs. Mubarak to be friends of my family," she said in 2009); pushed for war in Libya after initially missing 2010's Arab Spring ("We didn't get off to such a great start with Egypt — let's reverse that with Libya"); and endorsed military coups (initially questioning whether the Honduran military's 2009 takeover fit the definition of a coup, then enthusiastically welcoming the country back into the international community). Many of Wal-Mart's clothes are made in Honduras.

### SECRETARY OF LABOR

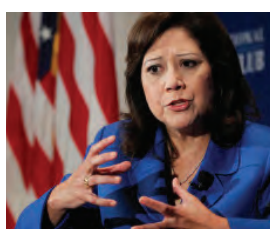
HILDA SOLIS (2009 – JANUARY 2013)

Both Hilda Solis's nomination and resignation as secretary of labor were met with warm and fuzzy press releases from the nation's largest unions. It's not surprising, because she basically gets the fight for workers' rights (even if her boss doesn't). Remember the huge standoff in Wisconsin over anti-union governor Scott Walker's attack on public workers in 2011? As janitors and firemen occupied the state house, the *New York Times* reported, "When West Wing officials discovered that the Democratic National Committee had mobilized Mr. Obama's national network to support the protests, they angrily reined in the staff at the party headquarters. Administration officials said they saw such events beyond Washington as distractions from the optimistic 'win the future' message Mr. Obama introduced with his State of the Union Address." Solis's reputation of fighting for worker's rights gained nothing from an administration that wouldn't lift a finger for the pro-worker Employee Free Choice Act while unions, public and private sector, shrink and grow weaker.

### SECRETARY OF ENERGY

STEVEN CHU (2009 – PRESENT)

Nobel Prize winner Chu has the respect of the scientific community and occasionally calls it as he sees it (saying in 2007, for example, "Coal is my worst nightmare"), but his lackluster leadership has promoted the misnomer "clean coal," pushed nuclear power (even after Japan's Fukushima disaster), wanly supported the controversial XL Tar Sands Pipeline, and been simply missing in action on global climate change. If he continues this way, Chu's place in the history books will be as the one administration official who was smart enough to realize the dangers of global climate change, but did virtually nothing to mitigate the coming storm.



### SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

TIMOTHY GEITHNER (2009 – PRESENT)

Timothy Geithner is so in lockstep with Wall Street that everyone is under the mistaken belief that he's directly from Goldman Sachs (which tends to happen when you negotiate a secret \$30 billion loan for an investment firm with negligible interest). From World Trade Organizations negotiations under Clinton in the 1990s to saving Wall Street after it cratered the economy, Geithner has protected banking interests under Democrats for decades now. Even the usually supportive *New York Post* was moved to comment, "If there's a common thread to almost every bank bailout over the last 15 years, it's that Timothy Geithner was always somewhere in the room."

### SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY

JANET NAPOLITANO (2009 – PRESENT)

The Obama Administration has detained and deported a record number of undocumented immigrants, expelling around three quarters of a million people in 2011 and 2012 alone.

### SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

KEN SALAZAR (2009 – FEBRUARY 2013)

As senator, the conservative Democrat voted against measures such as increasing fuel standards, repealing tax breaks for ExxonMobil, and protecting the Florida coast from offshore drilling. As secretary, he upheld the Bush-era policy preventing the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions via the Endangered Species Act and has hewed close to the whims of mining, drilling, and ranching interests. Curiously, the one scandal that has affected him involves hundreds of wild horses, sold off to a known horse slaughterer for \$10 apiece. When questioned about it late last year, Salazar told a reporter: "If you do that to me again, I'll punch you out."

### SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

ARNE DUNCAN (2009 – PRESENT)

After eight long years of W. keeping public school teachers on edge, Duncan went out of his way to keep up the heat. Before heading to Washington, he pushed school privatization in Chicago; in 2010, when every teacher in a poorly performing Rhode Island high school was fired, he applauded the move as "courageous"; in 2012, 10 states were finally given waivers to the much-criticized Bush-era "No Child Left Behind" policy, but Obama's similarly designed "Race to the Top" grants follow a similar painful path: treating education like a competition with winners and losers. Teachers are still on edge and students are still suffering.

## THE FIRST FOUR YEARS: OBAMA'S BLOODY FOOTPRINT

Since his inauguration in 2009, President Obama has overseen a shadowy and globalized war on terror that relies heavily on elite special operations units and an increasingly militarized Central Intelligence Agency. As of May 2012 U.S. special operations forces were on track to undertake missions in 120 countries around the world, up from approximately 80 the year before.

In addition to ongoing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. forces along with the CIA have carried out airstrikes in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. A veil of secrecy surrounding the administration's drone program has made the cost of the strikes difficult to tally but reports by the UK's bureau of Investigative Journalism indicate President Obama has presided over more than 300 drone strikes in Pakistan alone, with up to 891 civilians killed, including 176 children. In Yemen, U.S. strikes have taken the lives of three U.S. citizens, including 16-year-old Abdulrahman Al-Awlaki. A strike in the remote region of al Majala in southwestern Yemen in December 2009 resulted in the deaths of 41 people, including at least 21 children.

Under President Obama, the United States played a crucial role in the 2011 military campaign to oust Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, which human rights organizations claim led to the deaths of 72 civilians, including 20 women and 24 children. Much of the administration's involvement in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula has been made possible by the expansion of a secretive drone base in Djibouti, where the unmanned vehicles are said to conduct over a dozen missions in the region each day.

While Obama has claimed that he put an end to the Bush-era tactic of extraordinary rendition, in which terror suspects are captured and shipped to a third country for interrogation, a January report by the *Washington Post* revealed the administration has continued to embrace the practice. In addition, an investigation in 2011 by *The Nation*'s Jeremy Scahill uncovered secret prisons in Somalia used by the CIA.

Most recently the Obama administration has offered drone and aerial fueling support to French forces operating in Mali.

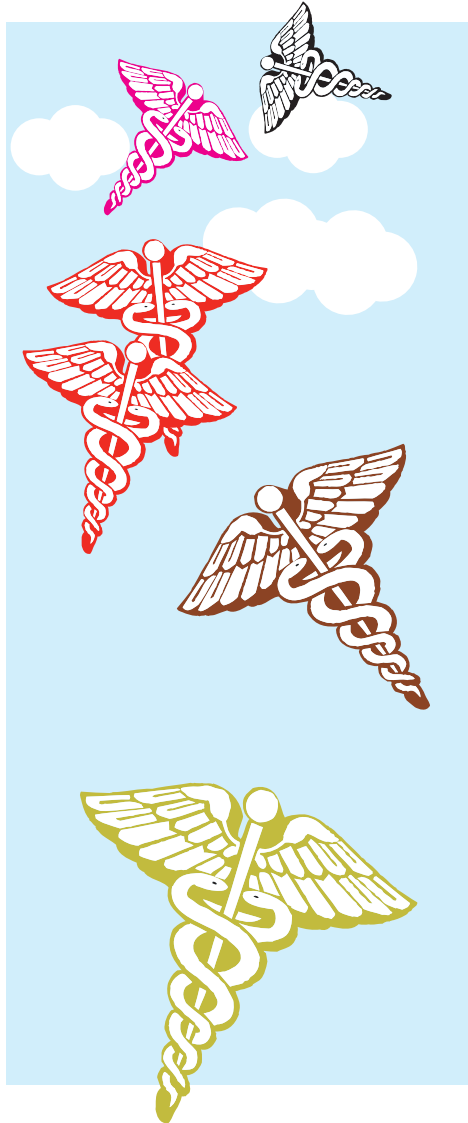
—RYAN DEVEREAUX

# AT HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, NOWHERE TO GO BUT UP

**ERIC LAURSEN**

SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



If ever there was a part of the Washington bureaucracy that has nowhere to go but up, it would be the Department of Health and Human Services. Last year, HHS was the centerpiece of the Obama administration's efforts to show that it could be just as big a budget-cutter as any Republican White House, not for a moment sparing the most vulnerable. In some ways, it succeeded.

HHS administers a host of programs that aren't well known to most Americans but that are vital to poor households. Obama's 2013 austerity budget called for cutting the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, reducing immunization programs for the low-income and uninsured, slashing graduate education funding for children's doctors and eliminating of the Preventive Health and Health Service Block Grant. The latter is an especially valuable way to shift the focus of U.S. healthcare toward prevention and wellness—something that's just considered rational in most industrialized countries.

All of these are cuts that Americans will find themselves paying for sooner or later in the form of privation and worse health care for the poorest. In addition, we'll be dealing with the consequences of continuing woeful underfunding of vital services like foster care and other child care, HIV/AIDS prevention programs and home-based care for seniors.

So where do I go from here, as secretary of HHS? First, a word of definition. Outside of Homeland Security, HHS is the biggest mishmash of programs and services in the

federal government. Another way to think of it is Medicare, Medicaid and everything else. Medicare makes up 56 percent of HHS's budget, Medicaid 30 percent, and everything else — from Indian Health Services to HIV/AIDS — 8 percent. It's that last 8 percent that always takes the brunt of the budget cuts.

As secretary, I'll push aggressively to allow State Innovation Waivers for ObamaCare by 2014, rather than 2017, so that Vermont and other states that choose to follow its lead can move ahead with single-payer alternatives to the "market-based" solutions embodied in the president's healthcare law. I'll go to the people to make clear the long-term cost of the program cuts that the administration pushed for HHS in 2012. And I'll fight Republican efforts to turn Medicaid into a block-grant program that state governments can then manipulate away from its focus on helping the poor and working poor.

HHS is probably the most vilified set of programs in government, used over and over by conservatives looking for cheap ways to assert that poverty programs breed poverty or that government is trying to use these programs to create a society of welfare dependency. Most HHS secretaries in recent decades have just tried to keep their heads down and avoid controversy. I'll take a different route. I'll expose Republican efforts to censor scientific

research at the Centers for Disease Control, to keep contraception unavailable, to exempt

certain states from the universal coverage requirements of ObamaCare and to keep end-of-life planning from being covered as part of Medicare. Among many other things.

This might seem less than overwhelming — good policy, but nothing more. But the conservative culture war on social services doesn't usually take the form of out-and-out assaults on big, universal programs like Medicare. Instead, it consists of attacks on parts of these programs, and on more modest programs, usually in the name of religious freedom or family values. Often these are inaccurate, such as Mitt Romney's campaign-trail accusation that Obama wanted to "gut" work requirements for federal welfare programs. But the point is to deny the validity of any solution to social problems that can be described as collective or cooperative — even when it's run by government and even when the private sector makes a profit from it, as with Medicare and much of ObamaCare.

The first duty of the secretary of HHS has got to be to publicly, aggressively fight back against these attacks, making clear that the work of HHS is vital to maintaining a civilized society and throw the conservatives' real agenda back in their faces — to cut anything and everything that poses any threat to the low-tax, low-wage economic regime they've built for themselves. Should the President prefer that I avoid controversy and leave this fundamental issue alone, my course is clear—I will resign.



*Eric Laursen is an independent journalist based in western Massachusetts. He's the author of The People's Pension: The Struggle to Defend Social Security Since Reagan.*

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and the Making of Black Left Feminism

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TUE JAN 22, 7PM • FREE  
READING: VALERIE JONES, *VERONICA JONES AND THE CASE OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL*  
In 1996 Veronica Jones courageously took a stand for truth and justice in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Before she died in 2009, she related her life story to her sister, Valerie, who crafted Veronica's experiences into a riveting memoir about police misconduct, wrongful incarceration, and the American justice system.

THU JAN 24, 7PM • \$5 SUGG  
OCCUPY UNIVERSITY PEOPLE'S RECONSTRUCTION SERIES  
In the final event of this series, organized by Occupy University in order to address issues related to Hurricane Sandy, we ask what communities can do to address both the immediate threats and consequences of climate change as well as the systemic injustices that disasters like Sandy uncover.

SUN JAN 27, 7PM • \$5 SUGG  
PERFORMANCE: MARY LAMBERT & ROSE MCALEESE  
Mary Lambert, lesbian poet and singer-songwriter of Macklemore's "Same Love" stops in with poet Rose McAleese. At 23 years old, both writers have shaken up the Seattle poetry scene, each winning the Seattle Grand Slam for 2011 and 2012.

THU JAN 31, 7PM • \$5 SUGG  
PRESENTATION: "SEX WORKER ACTIVISM IN NYC"  
Please join activists and organizers from the Sex Workers Outreach Project—New York City to discuss the local issues the sex worker community is fighting, why local organizing is direly important, and the impact of community organizing on sex workers.

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

howard z

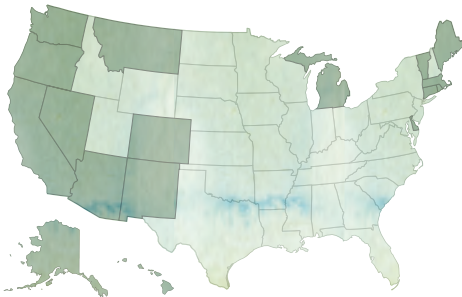
DRUGS

A NEW DAY FOR THE DEA



DEBORAH SMALL  
DIRECTOR  
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

I accept the assignment to become head of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). I propose the following new mission for the agency:  
*DEA = Dare to Explore Alternatives*  
I think it's fair to say our drug enforcement policies fit the definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result.  
My goal as DEA administrator is to break the cycle of agency dependency on supply-side approaches emphasizing interdiction, arrest, conviction and incarceration as the principal way to win the "war on drugs." I recommend the DEA explore alternative drug policies and practices in the following three areas:



REFORM MARIJUANA POLICY  
*A. Reschedule Marijuana and Allow State Experimentation*  
It's time the DEA acknowledged the shift in public opinion regarding the appropriateness of punishing people for possessing and using marijuana — 16 states and the District of Columbia have approved access to marijuana for medical use. Last November voters in Washington and Colorado approved initiatives authorizing their states to tax and regulate marijuana cultivation and distribution to adults for recreational use. Recent



polls have affirmed this is not just a regional shift — nationally, more than 50 percent of Americans 40 years and younger believe marijuana should be legally regulated for adult use, more than two thirds of Americans of all ages support access to medical marijuana. Yet federal policy still considers marijuana a dangerous drug, deserving of Schedule 1 status, meaning it has no legitimate use — more dangerous than cocaine, which is classified Schedule 2. The policy defies logic and experience, which is why almost one-third of states have enacted laws directly in defiance. What should a transformational administration do?

*Dare to explore alternatives!*  
I recommend the DEA support the request by the governors of Washington, Rhode Island and Vermont that the federal government reschedule marijuana consistent with available science and medical research.

President Obama recently affirmed that pursuing marijuana users is not a priority of federal law enforcement; as he correctly noted, "we have bigger fish to fry." It makes sense for the DEA and Justice Department to allow officials to develop and implement effective regulatory schemes in states that have approved access to marijuana. A recent economic study projects the development of a legal supply of domestically grown cannabis in the United States has the potential to dramatically reduce the profits derived by Mexican drug cartels — for instance, the Sinaloa cartel could lose about \$1 billion/year if it had to compete with marijuana grown in Washington or Colorado. Few U.S. drug policies have significantly affected the profitability of the illicit drug trade; the DEA should encourage states to be "laboratories for experimentation" by exploring alternative drug policies that can undermine the power and profits of drug trafficking organizations is something the DEA should endorse.

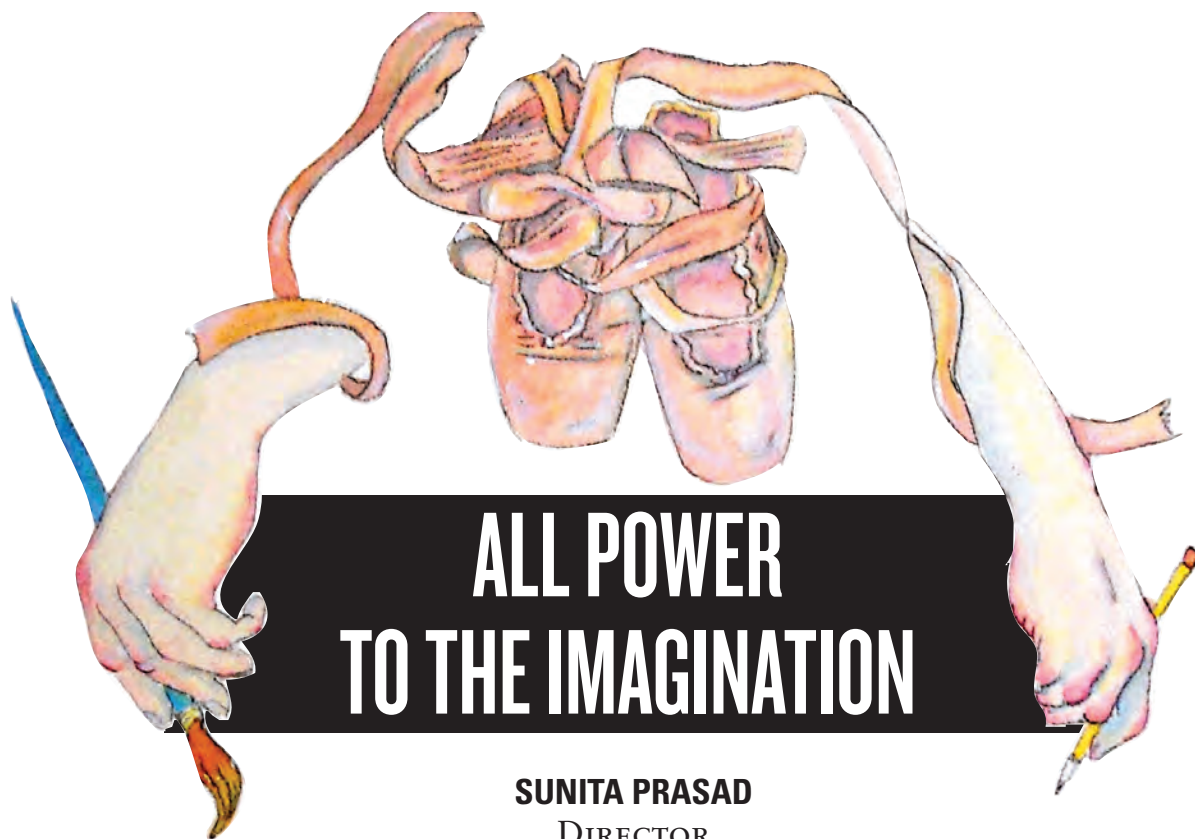
*B. Reduce Marijuana Arrests*  
Nationally, arrests for marijuana offenses account for nearly half of all drug arrests by state and local law enforcement, often made possible by federal funding. African-American and Latino youth are disproportionately targeted for drug law enforcement, and marijuana arrests are no exception. This racially biased law enforcement undermines the Obama administration's goal of increasing high school retention rates and improving educational outcomes, particularly for black and Latino youth. Under my direction, the DEA will make receipt of federal funding for local law enforcement contingent on demonstrating elimination of

racial, gender and ethnic and age disparities in drug law enforcement as well as reducing arrests for marijuana offenses.

**REDUCE PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE**  
While the DEA has focused primarily on fighting illicit drug use, prescription drug abuse has reached epidemic proportions. In recent years more people have died from prescription drug overdoses than all the illicit drugs combined. For millions of Americans with inadequate or no health insurance, pharmaceuticals are marketed as a relatively cheap way to deal with various health challenges. Painkillers and medications that treat attention deficit disorders have become common drugs of abuse. So far the DEA has relied on strategies designed to reduce diversion, but an unintended consequence of this approach has been shortages of medication for legitimate patients with immediate needs.  
The DEA will initiate a public education campaign about the dangers of prescription drug abuse — Pills Can Kill. The campaign will target populations with heightened vulnerability to prescription drug abuse including students, shift workers, military veterans and people with mental health disorders. I recommend the DEA collect data from states with medical marijuana programs to assess the efficacy of cannabis for pain management. Evidence suggests marijuana may provide a viable alternative to oxycodone and other pharmaceutical opioids for managing acute and/or chronic pain.

**MITIGATE THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF U.S. DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
Nowhere have the consequences of drug war militarization been felt more acutely than in Mexico. Over the past six years, more than 60,000 men, women and children have lost their lives in Mexico's bloody drug war as cartels battle the government and each other for access to the lucrative U.S. drug market. Often they're killing each other with guns that come from the United States, purchased with money laundered by U.S. banks.  
Our neighbors to the south have become disillusioned with the war on drugs. Recently leaders from Mexico, Honduras, Belize, Costa Rica and Guatemala have called for reassessing the global drug prohibition regime that relies on punishment and exploring alternative approaches that will reduce the violence, sickness and death associated with the drug war. The DEA will endorse the call by Latin American leaders for a regional meeting of the Organizatio of American States to discuss drug policies followed by a U.N. General Assembly Special Session on drug prohibition no later than 2015. Together we will Dare to Explore Alternatives to punitive drug prohibition.

Deborah Peterson Small is the executive director of Break the Chains, a public policy research and advocacy organization committed to addressing the disproportionate impact of punitive drug policies on poor communities of color.



# ALL POWER TO THE IMAGINATION

**SUNITA PRASAD**

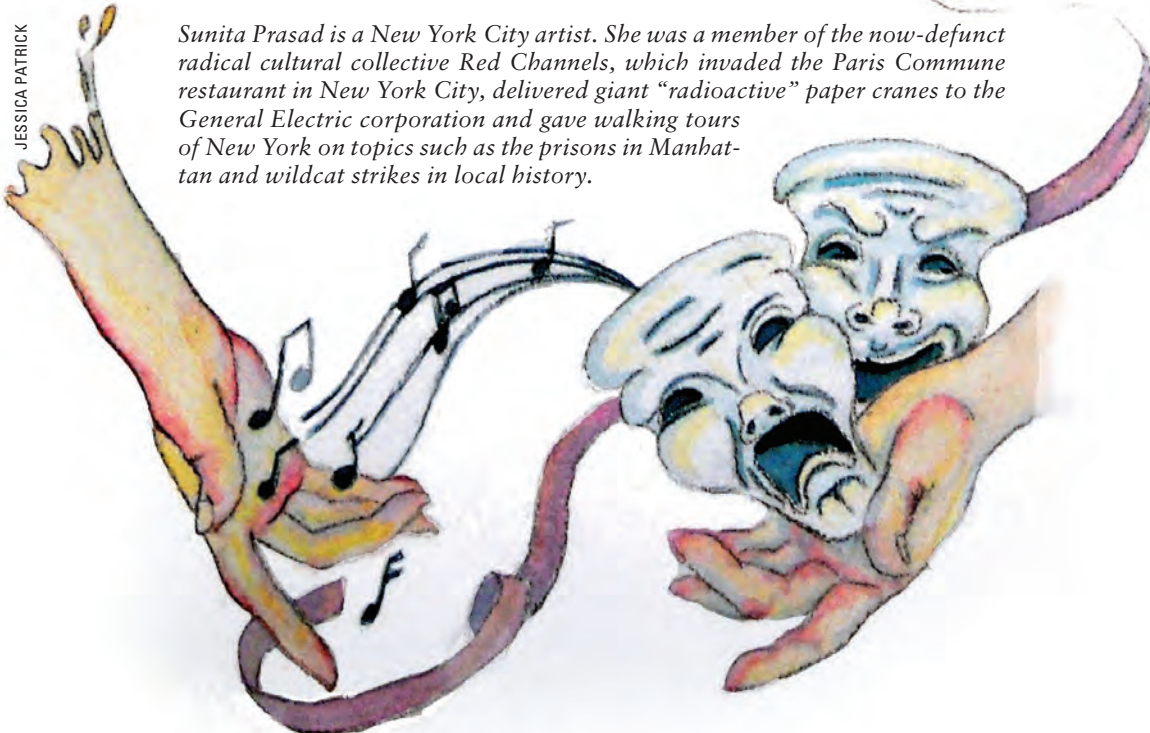
DIRECTOR

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

- 1. Re-instate grants to artists.** 501(c)(3) status will no longer be a requirement to access public funds for creating culture. The arts are one of the last (and quickly dwindling) fringes of rote professionalization, and funding will support continued experimentation in the contours of creative life.
- 2. Definitively lift all content restrictions on funding, whether explicit or tacit.** Content restrictions run counter to the First Amendment. Artists cannot create a diverse dialogue that enriches our culture under conditions of censorship. Art is not meant to advance a singular point of view, particularly not one that is hetero-sexist, racist, and misogynistic, such as the one that led to the introduction of the content restrictions idea and near dissolution of the NEA 20 years ago.
- 3. Up the percent of the one percent.** In the age of record prices in a rarefied but over-exposed corner of the art market, the NEA recommends a tax of 50 percent on all art sales of \$50,000 or greater. This revenue is to be earmarked to fund co-operatively run exhibitions, performances, and public art projects, as well as healthcare for cultural workers.

## ALL POWER TO THE IMAGINATION.

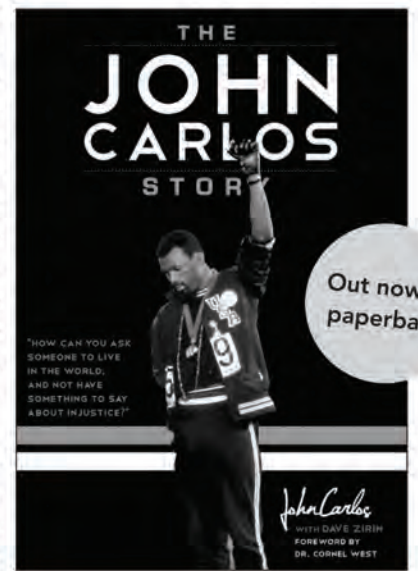
Sunita Prasad is a New York City artist. She was a member of the now-defunct radical cultural collective Red Channels, which invaded the Paris Commune restaurant in New York City, delivered giant "radioactive" paper cranes to the General Electric corporation and gave walking tours of New York on topics such as the prisons in Manhattan and wildcat strikes in local history.



"John Carlos is an American hero." —Michael Moore

John Carlos and Tommie Smith's Black Power salute on the 1968 Olympic podium sparked controversy and career fallout. Yet it remains one of the most iconic images of the Black Power movement. Here is the story of one of the men behind the salute, lifelong activist, John Carlos.

By John Carlos  
with Dave Zirin  
Foreword by  
Cornel West



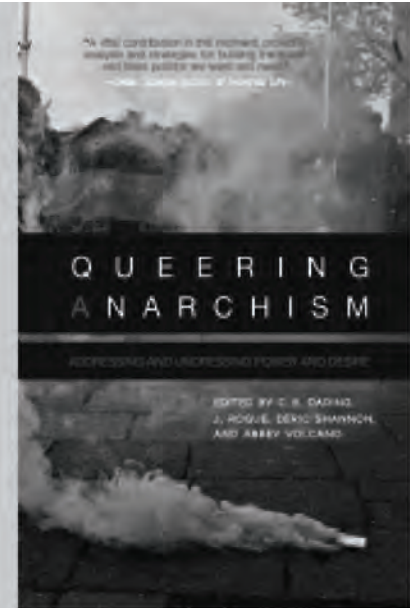
"Carlos' athletic genius on the field is matched by his heroic will to overcome trials and tribulations in his personal life. . . . This is an inspiring and eloquent story about a great American whose commitment to truth, justice and democracy were tested and found true."  
—Michael Eric Dyson

"An intelligent and insightful look into the journey of one of our most underrated heroes. . . . You can feel his passion (and his anger) in every word."  
—Jemele Hill, ESPN

"A blow by blow detail of triumph vs tragedy from the jump. . . . This story drills a hole into the myth of black athlete success and worship."  
—Chuck D, Public Enemy



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